

^e The generalship of this movement was undertaken chiefly by Sidney Webb, who played such bewildering conjuring tricks with the Libeial thimbles and the Fabian peas that, to this day (1892), both the Liberals and the sectarian Socialists stand aghast at him "

It was all tremendous fun the greatest fun, no doubt, at the stage when "permeation" was still really anonymous But it was too well done and too successful to remain anonymous Liberals began to wake up to what was going on Their new weekly. *The Speaker* denounced Fabianism as

* a mixture of dreary, gassy doctnnairism and crack-brained farcicality, set off with a portentous omniscience and flighty egotism not to be matched outside the walls of a lunatic asylum "

A spleen so blatant must have delighted the Fabian Junta, and not least the "portentous omniscient" and the "flighty egotist" It was an eloquent tribute to their success That success, however, made the maintenance of anony-mity impossible

It came to an end, when, in the winter of 1889, there appeared a modest and most attractive looking pale green volume, entitled *Fabian Essays in Socialism* This contained eight pieces by seven hands Bernard Shaw (editor), Sidney Webb, Sydney Olivier, Graham Wallas, Annie Besant, William Clarke, Hubert Bland All but one of the essays had been delivered by the essayists, as lectures, in the previous months Sidney Webb's account of the historic basis of Socialism had, however, not been spoken

by him, since, in the company of Edward
Pease he had,
in October 1888, sailed for a short trip to
the United
States They got back, however, in time to assist
m publica-
tion That publication was enterprising and
original
He has described it himself, in the Preface
he wrote to
the 1920 Edition of the famous Essays